

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. - 8. (Canceled)

9. (Currently Amended) An automatic analyzer comprising:

~~analyzing means an optical detector~~ for analyzing a sample;

a plurality of sample probes, each sample probe including a sample probe head
having a sample nozzle for dispensing a sample;

~~a plurality of rails in the same plane~~, said sample probes being mounted to
move along said rails;

said sample probes moving along said rails from a sample suction position to a
sample discharge position; ~~and~~

a plurality of reaction cuvettes into which samples are dispensed by said
sample probes and in which a reaction takes place followed by analysis with said ~~analyzing~~
~~means~~optical detector; and

a controller for controlling said sample probes to reciprocally move between
said sample suction position and said sample discharge position alternately so as to prevent
said sample probes from colliding with each other, a sample in a sample container positioned
at said sample suction position being discharged into a reaction cuvette that is moved and
positioned at said sample discharge position using said plurality of sample probes,

wherein said rails make a closed loop including said sample suction position and said sample discharge position;

each of said sample probes having a moving path, moving paths of said sample probes being different from each other, each of said sample probes being moved between said sample suction position and said sample discharge position, and

——— a plurality of washing ports for washing said sample probes, each of said washing ports being arranged at each of said moving paths; and

each of said sample probes includes a nozzle clogging detecting means detecting clogging of a nozzle of one of said sample probes, said controller controlling sample dispensing operations of said sample probes on the basis of the information regarding clogging of said nozzle of said one of said sample probes, wherein when said controller judges clogging of a nozzle sucking a sample from one said sample container by said one sample probe on the basis of said information, said controller stops another said probe from sucking a sample from said one sample container.

10. (Previously Presented) An automatic analyzer according to claim 9, wherein said closed loop has substantially an elliptic shape, rectangular shape, or rhombic shape looking from above said sample probe.

11. – 12. (Canceled)

13. (Previously Presented) An automatic analyzer according to claim 9, wherein said controller stops use of any of said sample probes and controls carrying out sampling by another one of said sampling probes.

14. (Canceled)

15. (Currently Amended) An analyzing method for an automatic analyzer comprising the steps of:

dispensing samples from a plurality of sample probes, each sample probe including a sample probe head having a sample nozzle for dispensing a sample, each of said sample probes including a nozzle clogging detecting means detecting clogging of a nozzle of one said sample probes;

mounting said sample probes to move along a plurality of rails from a position for suction of a sample to a sample ~~dispensing-discharging~~ position, said rails forming a closed loop in the same plane including said sample suction position and said sample discharge position; and

controlling said sample probes to move reciprocally between said sample suction position and said sample dispensing position alternately so as to prevent said sample probes from colliding with each other, a sample in a sample container positioned at said sample suction position being discharged into one of a plurality of reaction cuvettes, in which a reaction is to take place that is moved and positioned at said sample ~~dispensing-discharge~~ position, using said plurality of sample probes;

said controller controlling sample dispensing operations of other sample dispensing means on the basis of the information regarding clogging of said nozzle of said one of said sample probes, wherein when said controller judges clogging of a nozzle sucking a sample from one said sample container by said one sample probe on the basis of said information, said controller stops another said probe from sucking a sample from said one sample container, and

analyzing samples discharged into said reaction cuvettes with a-an optical
detector; and

wherein said movement of said sample probes makes a closed loop including said sample suction position and said sample discharge position;

each of said sample probes having a moving path, moving paths of said sample probes being different from each other, each of said sample probes being moved between said sample suction position and said sample discharging position, and

a plurality of washing ports for washing said sample probes, each of said washing ports being arranged at each of said moving paths.

16. (Previously Presented) An analyzing method according to claim 15, including moving said sample probes in said closed loop along a path that is substantially of an elliptic shape, rectangular shape, or rhombic shape looking from above said sample nozzle.

17. - 18. (Canceled)

19. (Previously Presented) An analyzing method according to claim 15, wherein said controlling includes a stopping operation with one said nozzle and carrying out sampling by another said nozzle.

20. (Canceled)

21. (Currently Amended) An automatic analyzer according to claim-209, wherein said controller further changes from one said sample container receiving a sample from which a sample is to be sucked to another said sample container that is different from said one sample container, and controls said another said sample ~~dispensing means~~ probe to suck a sample from said another sample container.

22. (Currently Amended) An automatic analyzer according to claim-209, wherein when said controller judges clogging of a nozzle sucking a sample from said one sample container by said sample ~~dispensing mechanism~~ probe on the basis of said information, said controller controls the sample ~~dispensing means~~ probe to wash the flow passage of said nozzle.